GETTING A DEEPER LOOK ‘INSIDE AMY SCHUMER’

THE COMEDIAN WANTS TO DO MORE THAN MAKE YOU LAUGH. PAGE 13

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Tuesday, April 1, 2014 **www.metro.us | t: MetroNewYork | f: MetroNewYork**

Hook up. The Dating Ring, a new start-up in the city, connects singles with matchmakers who arrange group dates for them.
It’s complicated. Group dates are determined based on human and algorithmic matchmaking. PAGE 02

Make us a match

Got a Poem In Your Pocket? Tweet us!

PAGE 06

Do a cheap wedding without losing face

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Sara Barron bares her awkward soul

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Need a tip for a trip? Greece is the word!

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So much for Mets’ changing fortunes

PAGE 20

[The Difference] is One Year.

—Veronica Singh, MSED,
Dual Childhood / Special Education, ‘13

Military Veterans, ask about Operation Tuition Freedom.

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The Difference is Working.

1 NEWS

Singles gather at an event with The Dating Ring, a start-up that sets up group dates. / CHARLOTTE CHRISTOPHER

It's a match, no dot-com required

Set-up. The Dating Ring connects singles for group dates.

Young singles filled the back of a noisy Lower East Side bar on a recent Sunday night, looking for love or, at the very least, dates.

But they weren't there to see each other — these singles were meeting with matchmakers from The Dating Ring, a start-up that launched last summer.

Brittany Bradford, 24, was one of two matchmakers at the bar. On such interview nights, Bradford said she meets groups of singles every half-hour.

Her last group of the night looked uncertain as they crammed into a table. Bradford explained how the matchmaking works: After the interview, The Dating Ring sends members different options for group dates where they will ideally meet at least three potential hand-selected matches.

Bradford then asked the group a handful of questions, like "Who is your celebrity crush?" and "Do you have a religious preference?"

All three women in the group said they've tried online dating. "I hate dealing with fake profiles — I'm done with that nonsense," said Jeannelle, 30, who declined to give her last name. Jeannelle said she hopes human matchmakers will weed out the riff-raff.

Bradford said she spends six days a week interviewing singles and working to set up dates. After the question-and-answer sessions, she turns in her notes and discusses potential groups with other matchmakers.

Planning group dates requires human and algorithmic matchmaking, said Emma Tessler, 24, who co-founded The Dating Ring and works as the head matchmaker.

Picking from over 5,000 members, Tessler said she works between 11 and 16 hours a day creating matches. In one week, she may plan around 60 group dates.

Though Tessler and Bradford work day and night to make love connections, they both said they're having the time of their lives.

"I love hearing people talk about what they love," Bradford said.

Matchmaker

"We're not here to give you someone on a checklist who you think you want. We're here to introduce you to as many people as we can that we think you'd have great chemistry with."
Emma Tessler

ANDREA PARK
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Transit

NYPD: Robber punches teen on 7 train

Police are looking for a man who they said punched a teen in the face after stealing his iPhone on a 7 train in Queens last month. The suspect approached a 15-year-old boy on the Manhattan-bound 7 train at the Main Street subway station about 3:30 p.m. on Feb. 27 in Flushing.

The man snatched the teen's iPhone from his hand and punched him in the face before fleeing, police said. A surveillance camera caught the suspect leaving the station. Cops ask anyone with information to call Crime Stoppers at 800-577-8477. ANNA SANDERS

Brooklyn

Hit-and-run injures seven

Seven people were injured early Monday in Brooklyn when a driver hit multiple vehicles with an SUV before fleeing on foot, police said.

Driving near the intersection of Clarkson and Bedford avenues in Flatbush around 1:30 a.m., the suspect plowed into five cars while driving a Toyota Highlander. One of the cars was hit so violently that it flipped over.

Seven people were taken to the hospital after the hit-and-run, including two in serious condition.
EMILY JOHNSON

Blippar

Blipp it

Today's edition of Metro contains "Blippable" editorial content to make your paper interactive. Here's how it works: Download the free Blippar app on your device, open the app and hold it over "blippable" content in Metro to see longer stories online and get other interactive content experiences.

Quoted

"Bill Buckner got a raw deal."

Mayor Bill de Blasio, a Boston Red Sox fan, on the team's 1986 World Series loss to the New York Mets.

Egg sculptures will be displayed throughout the city. / GETTY IMAGES

On display. Join the search during the 'Big Egg Hunt' in New York

The Faberge Big Egg Hunt kicks off in New York City Tuesday, marking the first time the event has come to the United States.

During the hunt, which has previously been held in England and Ireland, gigantic egg sculptures will be hidden across the city.

Standing two and a half feet tall, each sculpture is unique, created by artists, fashion designers and architects like Julian Schnabel, Ralph Lauren and Zaha Hadid.

New Yorkers can participate in the hunt with a free phone app, "The Big Egg Hunt NYC." The app allows members of the public to "check in" every time they come across an egg.

The eggs will be auctioned off at Sotheby's after the hunt. Proceeds from the auction will be divided between elephant conservation organization Elephant Family and Studio in a School, an art program for New York City children.

The hunt runs through April 17.
EMILY JOHNSON

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– MARIE, BRONX, NY

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City to continue fight for speed camera funding

Plan B. The city is counting on an assembly bill after the state budget omits traffic funds.

The city won't give up that easily.

Mayor Bill de Blasio remained unfazed Monday by a lack of speed camera funding in the state budget, instead counting on a new bill that would fulfill a key part of his traffic safety plan.

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver introduced legislation to approve 140 new speed cameras in the city's school zones, as well as 125 cameras between Nassau and Suffolk counties. All cameras, including speeding and red light cameras, require state approval, as does any reduction to the city's speed limit.

Advocates and lawmakers hoped to pay for the cameras through the state budget, which the legislature and governor have until Tuesday to approve. But de Blasio said the discussion "is on the table" thanks to Silver's bill.

City Councilman Ydanis Rodriguez, who chairs the transportation committee, said in a statement that he was discouraged by the "petty politics played with the lives of New Yorkers" but nonetheless grateful for the new bill.

The citywide speed limit
GETTY IMAGES, ISTOCKPHOTO

CHESTER JESUS SORIA
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Play ball! Mayor throws first pitch

Mayor Bill de Blasio, a Boston Red Sox fan, was booed while throwing out the ceremonial first pitch before the home opener for the New York Mets on Monday. The mayor brought to the game several children affected by last month's explosion in East Harlem. For full game coverage, see page 20. GETTY IMAGES

Cold case

DNA leads to '96 rape charge

A DNA test conducted just before the statue of limitations would have run out on a unsolved sexual assault from 1996 has shed new light on the crime, the Queens District Attorney said on Monday.

Richard Thomas, 47, formerly of Far Rockaway, was arraigned on Friday with the rape of a woman assaulted more than 17 years ago.

Thomas was charged with first-degree rape and first-degree sodomy, facing up to 25 years in prison if convicted. His lawyer couldn't be immediately reached for comment. **EMILY JOHNSON**

Brooklyn

Man dies in electrical fire

Police said Lipa Briks, 93, died after a fire was reported about 1:15 a.m. Monday at his apartment in Coney Island, Brooklyn.

Fire marshals said the fire was caused by faulty electrical wiring. **ANNA SANDERS**

Council questions post-storm rebuilding

Commitment.
Officials ask the city to keep promises to victims of Superstorm Sandy.

The de Blasio administration promises to get Sandy aid to more homeowners soon. / GETTY IMAGES

Only six of the Superstorm Sandy-ravaged homes participating in the city's Build It Back program have seen construction start, officials said Monday.

The City Council held an almost seven-hour-long hearing Monday to tackle the initiative to rebuild homes destroyed by Sandy.

Many residents shared their frustrations with Build It Back, designed to connect homeowners with $1.45 billion in federal money to rebuild and restore buildings destroyed by the storm.

The city's new director of Housing Recovery, Amy Peterson, admitted to the program's mistakes and "overly complicated" process, but promised change.

"We're going to make sure the money gets out to people," she said.

"This administration may not have made the mess," Brooklyn Councilman Jumaane Williams said at the hearing, "but this administration has to clean it up."

Quoted

"Early missteps, unrealistic assumptions and overly complicated processes have hindered rebuilding." Peterson

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Poem In Your Pocket Day

New Yorkers have always had a reputation for being a brash bunch, but April is the time of year when city-dwellers get in touch with their lyrical side. "Hark, I'm walkin' here!"

April 24 marks New York City's 12th annual Poem in Your Pocket Day, where New Yorkers are encouraged to write their own poems or borrow from their favorite authors.

All you need to do to join in is carry a poem and share with your friends, family, classmates and colleagues on April 24.

Since 2010, Metro has partnered with the city to promote this special day by co-hosting the #NYCPoetweet Twitter poetry contest, which runs today through April 8. The five best poetweeters will get their character-efficient creations published in these pages on April 24.

Poem in Your Pocket Day is a special initiative for mayoral first lady Chirlane McCray, a known poetry fan who also writes poems on her blog, www.flonyc.tumblr.com.

"Poetry is everywhere in New York City, and Poem in Your Pocket Day and the #NYCPoetweet competition give us the chance to celebrate our city's literary vitality and history," she said in a statement to Metro.

How to enter

To have your poem seen by the masses, tweet your best original rhymes, verses and haikus using #NYCpoetweet by Tuesday, April 8. The five winners will have their poems published on April 24 in the pages of Metro, in honor of Poem in Your Pocket Day. Visit www.nyc.gov/poem to see last year's winners and to read the full contest rules.

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GM defect troubles.
Engineer approved faulty ignition switch

A General Motors engineer signed off on a design change for troubled ignition switches even though those changes did not meet company standards, according to documents provided to a U.S. House of Representatives panel.

The disclosure appeared to conflict with information provided by GM engineer Ray DeGiorgio during 2013 legal proceedings surrounding the ignition switches that are linked to 13 deaths.

The manufacturer of the switch, Delphi Automotive, said the redesigned switches used in 2008-2011 models of the recalled GM vehicles still did not meet GM standards, in an assertion that could increase the number of deaths linked to the defect. **REUTERS**

Safety measure

US to require new cars to have rearview cameras by 2018

The U.S. government said on Monday it will require new cars and light trucks sold in the United States to have rearview cameras by May 2018, a regulation intended to prevent drivers from backing into pedestrians.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said the new requirement will apply to all vehicles less than 10,000 pounds, including buses and trucks. **REUTERS**

NSA infiltrated RSA more deeply than thought, study

Activists hold a rally against surveillance. / GETTY IMAGES

Quoted

"We could have been more skeptical of NSA's intentions. We trusted them because they are charged with security for the U.S. government and U.S. critical infrastructure."

Sam Curry, RSA chief technologist told Reuters

Algorithms. Leaked documents showed NSA also aimed to subvert cryptography standards.

Security industry pioneer RSA adopted not just one but two encryption tools developed by the U.S. National Security Agency, greatly increasing the spy agency's ability to eavesdrop on some Internet communications, according to a team of academic researchers.

Reuters reported in December that the NSA had paid RSA $10 million to make a now-discredited cryptography system the default in software used by a wide range of Internet and computer security programs. The system, called Dual Elliptic Curve, was a random number generator, but it had a deliberate flaw — or "back door" — that allowed the NSA to crack the encryption.

A group of professors from Johns Hopkins, the University of Wisconsin, the University of Illinois and elsewhere now say they have discovered that a second NSA tool exacerbated the RSA software's vulnerability.

The professors found that the tool, known as the "Extended Random" extension for secure websites, could help crack a version of RSA's Dual Elliptic Curve software tens of thousands of times faster, according to an advance copy of their research shared with Reuters.

While Extended Random was not widely adopted, the new research sheds light on how the NSA extended the reach of its surveillance under cover of advising companies on protection. **REUTERS**

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Chemicals. Emergency crews are facing toxic challenge in landslide

Recovery teams struggling through thick mud up to their armpits and heavy downpours at the site of the devastating landslide in Washington state are facing yet another challenge — an unseen and potentially dangerous stew of toxic contaminants.

Sewage, propane, household solvents and other chemicals lie beneath the surface of the gray mud and rubble that engulfed hundreds of acres of a small rural community and left dozens dead and missing northeast of Seattle on the morning of March 22.

Managers of the recovery operation were taking special measures to protect the hundreds of workers on the scene from chemical exposure and to prevent toxic sludge from being carried offsite.

REUTERS

Crews work at the landslide site in Washington state. / GETTY IMAGES

Not hearing it

Supreme Court declines new contraception cases

The Supreme Court on Monday declined to take up preliminary appeals brought by Roman Catholic groups that want an exemption from part of President Barack Obama's health care law requiring employers to provide insurance that covers contraception.

The cases were brought by a series of Roman Catholic-affiliated nonprofit groups based in Washington, D.C., including Catholic University.

The legal issue is different from one involving for-profit companies that also object on religious grounds to the so-called contraception mandate, which was argued before the high court last week.

REUTERS

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North, South Korea trade artillery rounds

Provocations.
The White House called North Korea's actions "dangerous and provocative."

South Korean amphibious assault vehicles go to work in a joint landing operation by U.S. and South Korean Marines in Pohang. / GETTY IMAGES

North Korea fired more than 100 artillery rounds into South Korean waters as part of a drill on Monday, prompting the South to fire back, officials in Seoul said, but the exercise appeared to be more saber-rattling from Pyongyang rather than the start of a military standoff.

The North had flagged its intentions to conduct the exercise in response to U.N. condemnation of last week's missile launches by Pyongyang and against what it says are threatening military drills in the South by U.S. forces.

North Korea also accused the South of "gangster-like" behavior at the weekend by "abducting" one of its fishing boats and threatened to retaliate. The South said it had sent the boat back after it drifted into its waters.

"We believe the North's maritime firing is a planned provocation and an attempt to test our military's determination to defend the Northern Limit Line and to get an upper hand in South-North relations," South Korean Defence Ministry spokesman Kim Min-seok said.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said he would raise U.S. concerns about the North's behavior during a trip to China next week. **REUTERS**

Shells fired

500

More than 100 North Korean shells out of 500 or so fired landed in South Korean waters, prompting marines from the South to fire back with more than 300 rounds into the North's waters, officials in Seoul said.

Save the talks

Kerry returns to Middle East to push flailing peace talks

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry broke from his travel schedule for the second time in a week and rushed back to the Middle East on Monday to try to salvage Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. A major stumbling block is Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's demand that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas explicitly recognize Israel as a Jewish state. He has refused, saying that would destroy the Palestinians own narrative for nationhood.

Kerry was due to hold separate meetings later in the day with Netanyahu and Abbas. **REUTERS**

DMITRY MEDVEDEV
GETTY IMAGES

Held a meeting

Russian PM angers Ukraine

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev flaunted Russia's grip on Crimea by flying to the region and holding a government meeting there on Monday, angering Ukraine and defying Western demands to hand the peninsula back to Kiev.

But in a gesture that could ease tension in the worst East-West stand-off since the Cold War, Russia pulled some troops back from near Ukraine's eastern border. **REUTERS**

No sign of plane

Australia PM vows to continue hunt for missing Flight MH370

Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott said on Monday the hunt for Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 had no time limit, despite the failure of an international operation to find any sign of the plane in three weeks of fruitless searching.

A total of 20 aircraft and ships were again scouring a massive area in the Indian Ocean some 1,200 miles west of Perth. **REUTERS**

TONY ABBOTT
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Secret ways to cut wedding expenses

Flower tip: Roses, lithianthus and hydrangeas are some of the most affordable flowers. / COLOURBOX

Budget tips. Annie Lee, author of "Learn to Speak Wedding: Flashcards for Beginners," shares ways to save on wedding costs.

The endless expenses that come with a wedding are almost enough to make even the most party-loving couple want to elope. But there are ways to cut costs without your guests even noticing. We talked with Annie Lee — principal planner for leading New York City wedding planning firm Daughter of Design and author of "Learn to Speak Wedding: Flashcards for Beginners" — about what you can skimp on and what expenses catch couples by surprise.

When you are initially mapping out your budget, Lee says it's important to start with the guest count. "You can't know how far your budget will go or how much budget you'll need without it," she explains. Compile a list — including everyone your parents and the groom's parents will want to include.

This may come as a shock, but Lee says one big area where you really don't have to go all out is the invitations. "You can still get something very beautiful that's not custom, five-ply paper or letter-pressed in, like, five different colors," she says. "There are a lot of beautiful predesigned options by Wedding Paper Divas and Bella Figura, who have some really outstanding stuff. A lot of custom designers have even been doing lines with some of these predesigned places, so invitations are definitely a place where there's a lot of flexibility."

Another way to save money is by booking a DJ instead of a band. Not only is it a fraction of the cost, but it means fewer people to tip.

She also says it's socially acceptable to lose the party favors. "Your friends love you, but they don't care about having something with your name on it."

Something she says you absolutely cannot skimp on: the photographer. Getting bad photos back from your big day can be heartbreaking. But when it comes to the wedding album, watch out: "They cost anywhere between $1,500 to $5,000," Lee says. To get around this cost, Lee recommends making your own albums with a template.

Most importantly, be honest with your partner and your wedding planner about what you want and what you're able to spend. A little creativity combined with industry know-how will get you the wedding of your dreams without leaving you broke.

EMILY LAURENCE
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Don't forget

Tips add up

Something else that couples usually leave out of the budget is tips, which can sometimes add up to $7,000. "Think about it: You have to tip the photographer, valet guys, servers, hair and makeup people. ... It just goes on and on. A lot of people see an administrative service fee on the bill and think that's the tip. It's not," Lee says.

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What's your primary job?
I teach special education literacy through performing arts. Before I started teaching, I was a professional dancer.

Are you still dancing when you aren't teaching?
Yes, it's really important to me. ... For my second job, I teach contemporary dance on Sundays. My third job is teaching Pilates at the gym as sub. I teach on Saturdays when I can.

Do you work those extra jobs for money or because you're passionate about dance?
I don't necessarily need the money, but it's nice. I'd probably still do it because I love it. It's my outlet.

You're also working on your master's degree? When do you have time?
It happens! My master's is in special education, so it's directly related to my job, which helps. The classes are just two nights a week.

Are you happy with your lifestyle or is there anything you want to change?
It's so awesome to be able to do all the things I'm passionate about. It may sound like a lot, but if I was only doing one thing, I wouldn't feel fulfilled.

Rachel McSween may be busy, but she's passionate about all of her jobs. / RACHEL NEVILLE

SECOND SHIFT

Creative ways city dwellers make ends meet

EMILY LAURENCE
Contact us if you have a story to tell: emily.laurence @metro.us

The stats

Rachel McSween

Age: 28
Residency: Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn
Roommates: 0
Number of jobs: 3

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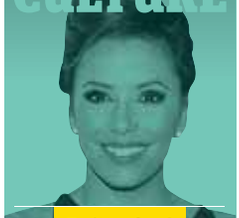
2 CULTURE



Twitter feed

Today, Chloe Grace Moretz is a bit tired, Ewan McGregor is feeling very appreciated and Eva Longoria is feeling the march of time.

@ChloeGMoretz: When u only get 2 1/2 hours of sleep

@mcgregor_ewan: Thanks for all the B'dy wishes. You've made a newly 43year old very happy. Cheers the noo.

@EvaLongoria: Just realized we did a little pilot called Desperate Housewives 10 years ago! March 2004!

Juan Pablo Galavis won't tell the world if he loves Nikki Ferrell or not, but Atlantic City has no problem telling him they definitely don't love him. / ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Bachelor gets bonked

Atlantic City didn't have the kindest of receptions for "Bachelor" star Juan Pablo Galavis and his girlfriend, Nikki Ferrell, who came to the resort town for a special appearance at The Pool After Dark at Harrah's Resort Atlantic City on Saturday night.

Galavis and Ferrell appeared on the red carpet around midnight — and the locals were angry. Galavis was originally to sit at a VIP table next to the stage until someone (it is not known who this local hero was) threw an aluminum beer bottle at him. After that, the organizers moved him to a cabana area for his own safety.

According to reports (read: the publicist who sent me this), Ferrell joined Galavis in the VIP cabana area where they "kissed" and "held hands" until around 3 a.m., hopefully fulfilling all contractual engagements.

Read: The two didn't stick around for very long. Once they collected their paycheck, they flew to Miami the next day.

THE WORD

Dorothy Robinson takes on the world of gossip

DOROTHY ROBINSON
@dorothyatmetro
dorothy.robinson
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Kid shows are now haute

1 This handbag isn't from your niece's first grade class, but from the runway during Milan Fashion Week in February. So basically, your 5-year-old nephew will soon be more fashionable than you.

2 Rita Ora celebrated her new single "I Will Never Let You Down" with an appearance in Leicester Square in London yesterday. She wore an outfit that will soon make her your aforementioned niece's fave singer.

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Real talk. Amy Schumer is back with jokes that have substance

Schumer glares at guest Michael Ian Black, an "interracial wedding photographer." / MATTHEW PEYTON

Amy Schumer isn't just in it for the laughs anymore. As the second season of "Inside Amy Schumer" begins (Tuesday at 10:30 p.m. on Comedy Central), so do sketches, stand-up and interview segments that ask more of their audience than to sit back and giggle.

"I guess because my profile as a comedian has gone up and people are watching the show, I feel a little bit more responsibility to be actually saying something," Schumer says of the new season, in a voice that's significantly more vulnerable than the brassy bellow she uses onstage. "Something" in this case can mean anything from sketches poking fun at misogyny in comedy to stand-up about being insecure.

In one sketch, a focus group of men respond to pointed questions regarding a show by a woman (who goes unnamed). As the focus group leader asks increasingly leading questions — "but how did you like how she looked?" — the men devolve into buffoonery and a second later, Schumer is interviewing a porn producer or asking New Yorkers about their dating lives in man-on-the-street segments.

But for those who are just fine with comedy and television the way they are, season two of "Inside Amy Schumer" revels in the same absurd silliness that made season one such a standout. "I watched a lot of 'The Twilight Zone' growing up and I feel like a lot of the scenes enter 'The Twilight Zone.' My mind goes to the absurd," Schumer says. So don't be surprised when comedian Michael Ian Black steps into the frame selling his services as an "interracial wedding photographer" or a fake commercial peddles "finger blasters" snacks.

Along for the absurdist ride is a cadre of guest stars that Schumer says she feels lucky to have booked based on the first season's popularity. Actors and comedians like Zach Braff, Mike Birbiglia and Paul Giamatti make appearances. Absurdity eclipses any message when Schumer and Giamatti make out— and that's just fine. **JULIA FURLAN**

Remote control

What she's watching

Schumer does stand-up five nights a week, so she says it's hard to find time to zone out in front of the TV, but when she does, it's usually with her sister. "There's this really insane show called 'Total Divas' about female [WWE] wrestlers. My sister and I like to drink some wine and watch that show."

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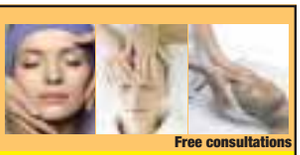

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TV watch list

Catch up with Mindy and Danny on "The Mindy Project." / JORDIN ALTHAUS/FOX

Comedy

'The Mindy Project'

The show returns from winter hiatus to face the consequences of its central "will they/won't they" couple's defining moment. **FOX, 9 P.M.**

Comedy

'Cougar Town'

With no news about a renewal, this might be the series finale for the always-in-danger-of-cancellation show. Is this goodbye forever, sweet Cul-de-sac Crew? **TBS, 10 P.M.**

Reality

'Wild Things with Dominic Monaghan'

Host Hobbit/"Lost" alum Monaghan visits the Australian outback in an episode alarmingly titled "Ghost Bat." **BBC AMERICA, 10 P.M.**

Drama

'Glee'

After bringing old stars back for the 100th episode, the show leaves its small-town Ohio setting to make its name in New York City. **FOX, 8 P.M.**

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Sara Barron is more awkward than ever

Author Sara Barron holds nothing back in her new book, "The Harm In Asking." / PROVIDED

Comedy. The personal essays in "The Harm In Asking" are as cringe-worthy as they are hilarious.

Author and comedian Sara Barron is releasing her second book, "The Harm in Asking," and without giving away any spoilers, it's safe to say that the author bares it all in these very personal essays. We talk with her about putting it all out there for the sake of comedy — and for the sake of coping.

You're really exposing yourself in this book. Is that nerve-wracking?
When you write a book, it's this unbelievably private process that then produces a public product. I wanted it to be entertaining and funny, but at the same time had to avoid thinking about what would be too embarrassing to write about because then I would have held back.

Have you always been aware of your awkwardness?
I think early on I figured out that to get through awkwardness, you have to make fun of yourself so you are less alone coping with it. When you're a little kid all you want is to be cool and popular. I didn't embrace it so much then, but as I got older I realized that part of me wasn't going away. So how do I deal with it? I deal with it by turning to comedy.

There are some really funny descriptions of your mother in the book. What did she think when she read it?
This is the second book I've written, and my mother is featured very prominently in the first one, so she has dealt with this once before. I had her read the first chapter before it was published, because I make a lot of fun of her having an over-the-top reaction to my brother's asthma. It was a more touchy way of making fun of her than I had before. Luckily, she has a good sense of humor. She also understands that if I don't do these things I don't really have much of a job. So she sacrifices her own dignity so I can work.

LASSE EMIL KRISTIANSEN
@metronewyork
letters@metro.us

Q&A

If you could talk to that 10-year-old girl that locked herself in the bathroom with the three imaginary friends, what would you tell her?
I'd tell her that it doesn't get better, because your mother will still be obsessed with your brother and he'll always be the favorite —so get used to it.

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GREECE'S PIECES

By sea. A cruise of mythic proportions doesn't need a gigantic ship.

Part of the Azamara experience is getting to explore after other cruises have sailed away. Blip this page to see more. / ALL PHOTOS BY TIM FATATO

It's impossible not to become an Odysseus wannabe among the bleached-white houses and blue-domed churches dotting Greece's Mediterranean landscapes. In fact, it's easy to take on a touch of Homer while traveling his terrain — there are mythically gorgeous vistas and unforgettable meals. But ultimately, it's Homer's own currency — stories — that make each moment of a trip like this come to life. This is a place where the rich history means everywhere you go, there's a story in it — and knowledgeable locals will help you understand if you're interested in knowing more.

With so much to see, opting to visit Greece and Turkey by sea is a convenient way to take in the many, many sights and sounds (and not to mention the meals!). On ships like the 686-person Azamara Journey, travelers don't have to worry about getting lost on the ship — they can put their energies into getting lost on shore. And when everything is steeped in centuries of ancient history, cruising can help organize a kaleidoscope of beauty into one memorable voyage. It's no wonder Odysseus wanted to go back so badly.

Postcard-perfect Oia

When people say "Oh, I would love to visit Greece," the town of Oia, on the island of Santorini, is usually the image in their mind. The traditional whitewashed structures — with churches capped in blue domes — are poised on the edge of a slope that leads to a perfectly azure ocean. The view is tough competition for even the most delicious Mediterranean meal.

When in Greece ...

While you're already hopping the flight to the Mediterranean, there's no reason not to extend your sea voyage to get more time on land. And if you're willing to forgo room service — and overpriced fare — taking a shot at living like a local has a romance about it that's hard to deny. A $150 Airbnb rental will get you a penthouse overlooking the Acropolis, complete with a roof deck framed by rose bushes. A major reward for renting a home and having an adventure also is that you'll get to stock your fridge, which is its own pleasure. Bonus: Gesticulating wildly about various kinds of olives will get you some samples, and they will be well worth the trip.

Adventures by night

Mykonos

Part of the Azamara experience is getting the chance to explore after the sun goes down. Sometimes, that can mean an impromptu jaunt to a restaurant like Hippie Fish, where the sardines are fresh and Greece's national drink, ouzo, makes it very easy to forget that the ship does, in fact, depart. Racing through the maze of shops and restaurants in the Mykonos town to get back on the ship is only part of the adventure. And if you stop

to take a photo with the town's resident mascot, a pelican named Petros (the second, or third depending on whom you ask), the only thing that really matters is that you make it on the ship.

JULIA FURLAN
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PLUS

A side of Turkey

Classical and cats

Traveling on what is essentially a floating building can mean small destinations are overrun with people who just hopped off the same ship as you did. Azamara tries to change that, offering excursions built into the cost that are a little dip into something special. At the ancient ruins at Ephesus in Turkey, an archaeological gem goes cultural. As the cats of Ephesus (the cutest and least effective security guards ever) skitter around the Odeon, guests take in the sunset to the sounds of a quartet playing familiar, gorgeous Bach and Beethoven.

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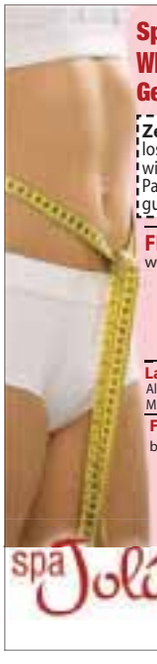

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5 Myths about summer camp

Summer planning. Yep, it's camp registration time already. Alan Saltz, the camp director at the 92nd Street Y, shares his wisdom.

No matter what your child's passion is, there's a camp where he or she will thrive. / COLOURBOX

Summer may be the last thing on your mind, but camp enrollment time is already here. The number of options and different types of camps can be overwhelming, especially if this is your first time sending your child to camp or he or she has entered a new age group. We talked with Alan Saltz, the camp director at the 92nd Street Y, to set the record straight on some of the most common misconceptions about summer camp.

Myth #1

Camp isn't for everyone

"There are so many different camps out there that if somebody doesn't like something traditional, they can try something specialty- or interest-based," Saltz tells us. "Not everyone is right for sleep-away camp, but then there are day camps. Then there are different types of day camps. At 92Y, we have camps for kids with special needs or who are autistic. There are camps for kids with diabetes or [who are] chronically ill. There's just so much out there."

Myth #2

It's too expensive

While a lot of camps do charge hefty fees, Saltz says many also offer financial assistance. "There are also plenty of camps that are either free or close to free, like the Fresh Air Fund." If you don't think you'll qualify for financial aid, Saltz recommends reducing the session, having your child attend for half of the advertised time, or asking about a payment schedule.

Myth #3

The most popular camp is the best

"Word of mouth is still the most popular way parents hear about camps," Saltz says. It's natural to ask the other parents in your kid's class where their child is going to camp, or finding out where the other kids in the neighborhood are going so you can send your son or daughter there, too. But Saltz warns against sending your child to a place where he or she won't make new friends. "It's nice to have a friend your child knows going as well to help ease the transition, but if there are five or six kids who want to be together the whole camp, it becomes more of a clique. It should be a balance," he says.

Myth #4

To get out of the city, sleep-away camp is the only option

Not true. Saltz reiterates the variety of camps available, saying there are several that bus kids out of the city so they can experience the outdoors. "There are even some sleep-away camps where kids go home on the weekends," he says.

EMILY LAURENCE
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emily.laurence@metro.us

Myth #5

Summer camp isn't educational

A new trend in summer camp is introducing formal education in fun ways that don't feel like school. "At 92Y we started robotics last summer, which we're doing again, and are thinking about adding a software development and coding class," Saltz says. So, summer camp isn't just sports and crafting. Whether your child is into photography, filmmaking, art or science, there are many ways to nurture those interests during the summer by finding a specialized camp.

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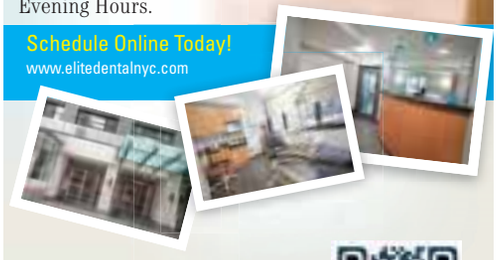

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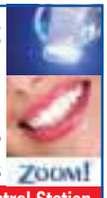
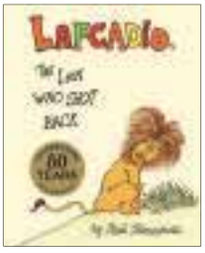
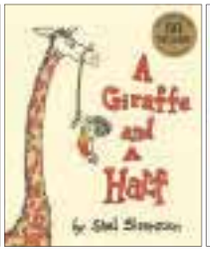
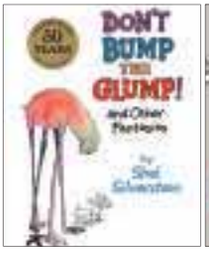
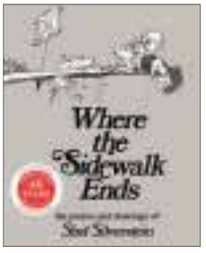


National Poetry Month. Shel Silverstein gets a hat tip with special editions of his classics









Although Shel Silverstein passed away in 1999, his works have continued to delight children and adults alike for over 50 years. In fact, 2013 and 2014 mark several big anniversaries for some of his best known works. The 50th anniversary of his first published book, "Lafcadio, the Lion Who Shot Back," was celebrated last year, and this year marks the 50th anniversaries of "The Giving Tree," "A Giraffe and a Half" and "Don't Bump the Glump!"

In honor of these milestones, HarperCollins has released special editions of these works. The re-releases are the perfect way to introduce your child to National Poetry Month, which kicks off today.

Silverstein's "The Giving Tree" is a heartwarming tale about a boy and a tree that he loves. But as time goes on "the boy grew older and the tree was often alone." Fifty years later, the story about growing up remains just as poignant.

Silverstein's first book, "Lafcadio, the Lion Who Shot Back," was the first to be published in this re-release extravaganza. As a lion, Lafcadio is highly sought game, but he makes a reasonable plea with a hunter to spare his life. The hunter, however, does not listen to Lafcadio, so the lion is forced to eat him. Lafcadio then "takes the gun home and practices and practices until he becomes the world's greatest sharpshooter."

Lafcadio eventually faces an existential crisis, unsure about whether he wants to remain a respected hunter or return to his lion friends. The book ends with Lafcadio making a surprising decision.

Seeing a return to its original cover art, Silverstein's hilarious "A Giraffe and a Half" is also part of the anniversary celebration.

Also getting a makeover is Silverstein's first collection of poems, "Don't Bump the Glump!" This was the only poetry book that Silverstein himself illustrated in full color.

Finally, the beloved "Where the Sidewalk Ends," which is perhaps Silverstein's most well known collection of poems and drawings, is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. ROBERT CRISCOLA

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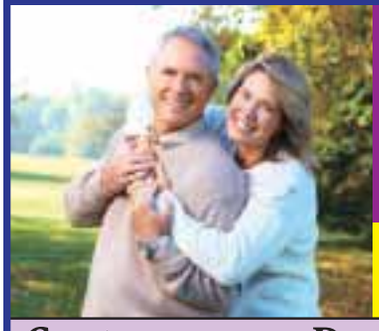

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♉ Taurus | April 21-May 21. Your skills should be put to better use. Finding ways to budget better and to increase your skills and talents will help you get ahead financially.

♊ Gemini | May 22-June 20. Don't let restlessness be your downfall. Use energy to make improvements to your home or self.

♋ Cancer | June 21-July 22. Widen your social circle. Get involved. Your generous nature will be put to good use, and you will make some interesting new friends.

♌ Leo | July 23-Aug. 22. Now is a favorable time to make a move. Use every resource available to you. Interviews and employment possibilities will have positive results.

♍ Virgo | Aug. 23-Sept. 22. You may be hardworking, but you need some recreation also. Mix business with pleasure and you'll make new allies.

♎ Libra | Sept. 23-Oct. 22. It's time for a change. If an emotional situation is causing you anxiety or headaches, consider moving on.

♏ Scorpio | Oct. 23-Nov. 21. Spice up your love life with a little romance. Whether you go dining or just stay at home, tune out any distractions.

♐ Sagittarius | Nov. 22-Dec. 21. Strive to get into a position that allows you to help others. Use any chance you get to improve your professional relationships and gain respect.

♑ Capricorn | Dec. 22-Jan 20. Interacting and socializing with clients and co-workers will help you gain valuable business connections.

♒ Aquarius | Jan. 21-Feb 18. You'll face opposition regarding a decision that changes the landscape at home or your workplace. Don't go over-budget.

♓ Pisces | Feb. 19-March 20. Whether you are involved in group functions or meetings, compromise will be the key. Get together with loved ones and plan a trip.

BERNICE BEDE OSOL

Sudoku: Easy and hard

		6	8					
	8	9				5		
4		1		7			3	6
			1			4	7	
		5	6	2	8	9		
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9			4					
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	8							1

How to play
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Letters

Starlet's depression is no joke

Re: 'Is Cyrus depressed?' (Metro, March 25) I'm frankly disgusted by the dismissive tone about reports about Miley Cyrus suffering the onset of depression.

Suffering from chronic depression myself, plus having lost at least one family member to depression-related suicide and seeing the signs of it in several others, I can safely say this is no laughing matter.

Let's all hope and pray that Ms. Cyrus is able to find the help and support needed to overcome this; there's been enough talent and beauty lost from this illness as it is.

JOSEPH CONNELL, VIA EMAIL

Food fight for freedom

The Obama administration has refused a request from Ukraine for weapons and ammunition. Instead, rations will be sent. All is not lost. The rations — known as MREs (Meals Ready To Eat) — can be thrown at invading Russian soldiers.

Anything military related referred to by initials sounds intimidating anyway. The Russians might think that the rations are a peace offering and be deterred from their evil designs, which would result in yet another Nobel Peace Prize for Obama.

RITCHIE TIEMANN, VIA EMAIL

letters@metro.us

Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words. Metro reserves the right to edit all letters. Please include your name and contact info.

Online

You can use your smartphone to discover today's crossword answers — right now! Download and open the Blippar app on your smartphone and hold the screen over the puzzle — it's that easy!

Crossword

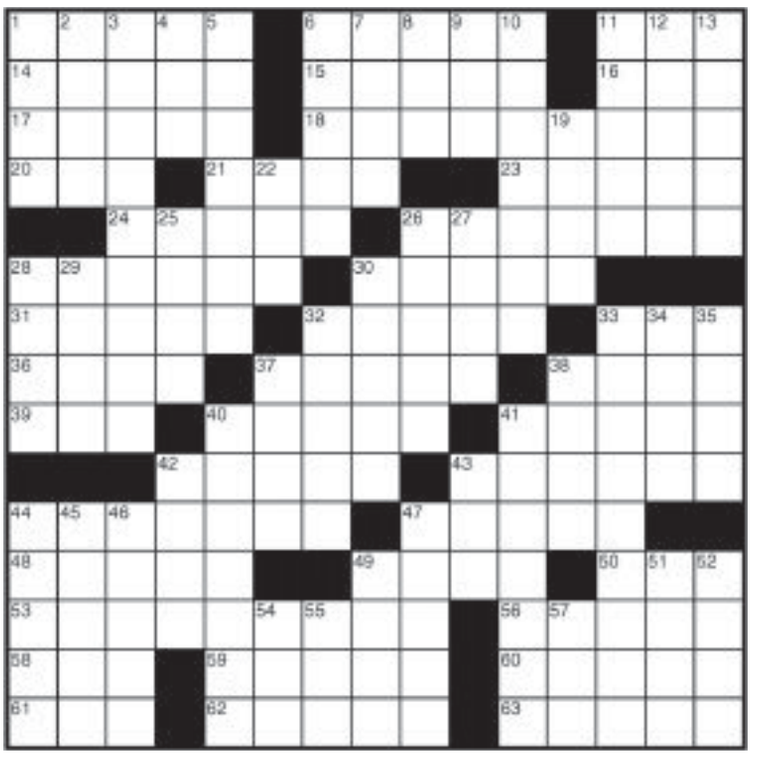
Across

1 Cowboy meet
6 Rattler's defense
11 Centurion's sweet nothing?
14 Lancaster group
15 Hippodrome
16 Astonished cry
17 "Goodfellas" actor
18 Kind of ribbon
20 Big bang ltrs.
21 "Bloom County" penguin
23 Bete —
24 Midwest airport
26 Glided
28 Soft wool
30 Shallow dish
31 Poker stakes
32 Prepare mushrooms, maybe
33 Finish first
36 More than misled
37 "Oh, for — sake!"
38 Crow's-nest cry
39 Explain further
40 European capital
41 Hotel offering
42 Car import
43 Arrange
44 Daydream
47 Brief review
48 Kuwaiti leaders
49 Luxury fur
50 Brownie
53 "Amazing, plus!"
56 Hair-raising
58 Riviera summer
59 Terre—
60 Long lock
61 August kid, maybe
62 Sign up for
63 Nobelist from Egypt

Down

1 Absorbed
2 Birds of ill —
3 Not unbiased
4 PC button
5 Canton natives
6 Faint
7 Makes a faux pas
8 Prefix for "classic"
9 Switch positions
10 Tycoon
11 Be in store
12 Ripple pattern
13 Held title to
19 Trellis coverer
22 For
25 Rushed off
26 Detectives' leads
27 Equine fodder
28 Powers of Hollywood
29 Oklahoma town
30 Terrace
32 Fill the bill
33 Mewled
34 Slightest trace
35 "Da" opposite
37 Sanskrit dialect
38 Mystique
40 Upscale wheels
41 Places for bulbs
42 Name meaning "truth"
43 Marsh
44 Defy authority
45 Ham it up
46 Audio partner
47 Choir platform
49 Speechless
51 Louvre's "Mona —"
52 Gala
54 Auric's creator
55 Umpire's yell
57 Geologic division

Yesterday's answer



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3 SPORTS

One and done

Wiggins declares for draft

Kansas forward Andrew Wiggins is, unsurprisingly, saying so-long to college after one season. The nation's top recruit last season will enter this year's NBA Draft, where he is projected as a Top 3 pick. The 6-foot-8 wing averaged 17.1 points and 5.9 rebounds in his freshman year.

Mets begin season of 'change' with ugly loss

MLB. Hours after Sandy Alderson talked about changing the culture, it's more of the same old Mets.

Mets general manager Sandy Alderson believes that the 2014 season is about a change in the perception of the franchise, and it begins with the ambitious goal of 90 wins.

"What I want to emphasize is, it's important for us to change the conversation," Alderson said prior to the Mets' 9-7 Opening Day loss to the Nationals in 10 innings. "This team is now about being successful, and being successful is not some nebulous concept about winning or being competitive or playing meaningful games some month [on the] calendar. This is about concrete expectations about what we need to do. Ninety wins is about a challenge. It's about changing the conversation. It's about framing a question for ourselves as to how we get there. I stand by the notion that we need to get better. Doing so, we need to set concrete goals for ourselves so that we have specific conversations about ourselves about how we're going to get there.

"It's time for us to get better."

But the question that will loom over the Mets' season is whether they will be able to improve with a subpar bullpen. Even Alderson conceded that it is a concern.

"The bullpen has not been good over the last several years," Alderson said. "It needs to get better. We're in the process of introducing more of our young players into that bullpen. We hope that's successful, but obviously that's got to play out during the season as well."

Monday afternoon's loss was a worrisome example, as the bullpen allowed five runs in three innings. Bobby Parnell blew his first save opportunity, while Jeurys Familia and John Lannan combined to allow four runs in the 10th inning.

"We just have to do a better job of shutting the game down," manager Terry Collins said after the loss.

Dillon Gee allowed four runs in 6 2/3 innings in his first career Opening Day start.

DENIS GORMAN
@DenisGorman
sports@metro.us

David Wright hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the 10th in his 11th Opening Day as a member of the Mets. / GETTY IMAGES

Quoted

"We gave this one away. We flat-out gave this one away."

David Wright, Mets captain and third baseman
On allowing five runs in the ninth and 10th in the loss to the Nationals

Money talks

COULD ALDERSON LOOK TO SIGN STEPHEN DREW?
GETTY IMAGES

Alderson hints at payroll flexibility

General manager Sandy Alderson delivered news Mets have longed to hear, but it came with a significant caveat.

"If a player is available to us later in the year, presuming we have some success to that point in the season, yes, [we can add salary]," Alderson said when asked if the organization has payroll flexibility.

The Mets entered the 2014 season with an $89 million payroll — 22nd in the majors — according to the AP.

"What I'm hoping is that as we get better, the fans respond to that improvement [and] that payroll number will go up," Alderson said. "We do have some flexibility."

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Season begins now

Yankees visit Houston to start 2014 season

One day after most of MLB began the 2014 season, the Yankees' quest to return to the postseason begins in Houston.

They do so, like in 2009 when they missed the playoffs the previous season, with a much different ballclub.

Eight of last year's Opening Day starters are unlikely to be in the lineup Tuesday. Five of them (Kevin Youkilis, Robinson Cano, Ben Francisco, Vernon Wells and Jayson Nix) aren't even on the team anymore. The lone holdover, Brett Gardner, goes from the top of the lineup to near the bottom and he'll be playing a different position — left field versus center field to make room for free-agent signee Jacoby Ellsbury.

CC Sabathia will take the mound in the season opener starting at 7:10 p.m. on YES Network. / GETTY IMAGES

"I think it is probably the biggest transition I've been through," manager Joe Girardi told reporters last week as spring training broke camp.

The team also lost franchise legends Andy Pettitte and Mariano Rivera to offseason retirements.

CC Sabathia, however, will be back on the mound as Opening Day starter for the sixth time as a Yankee — one shy of the record held by Ron Guidry, Whitey Ford and Mel Stottlemyre.

MARK OSBORNE

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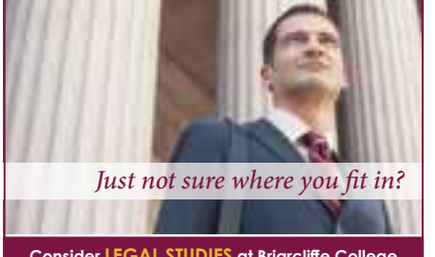

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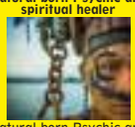
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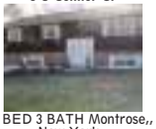
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